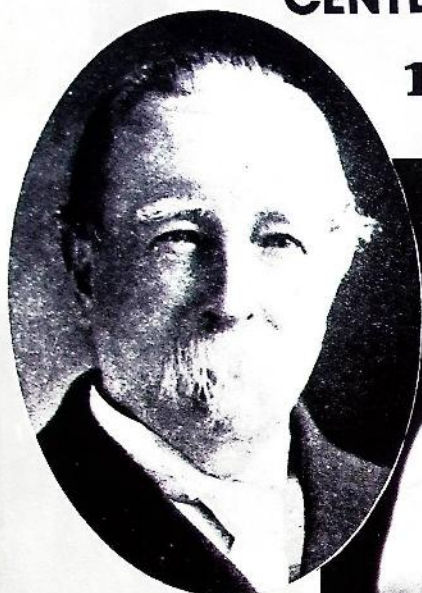


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Founder of Indian National Congress



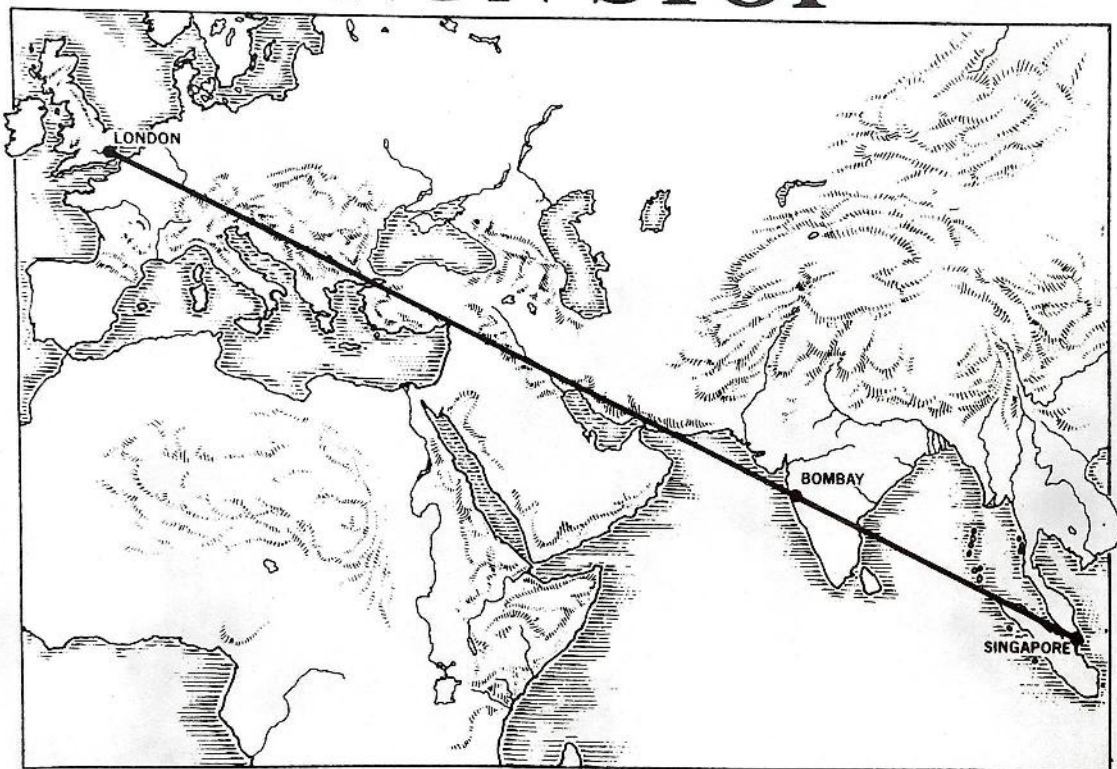
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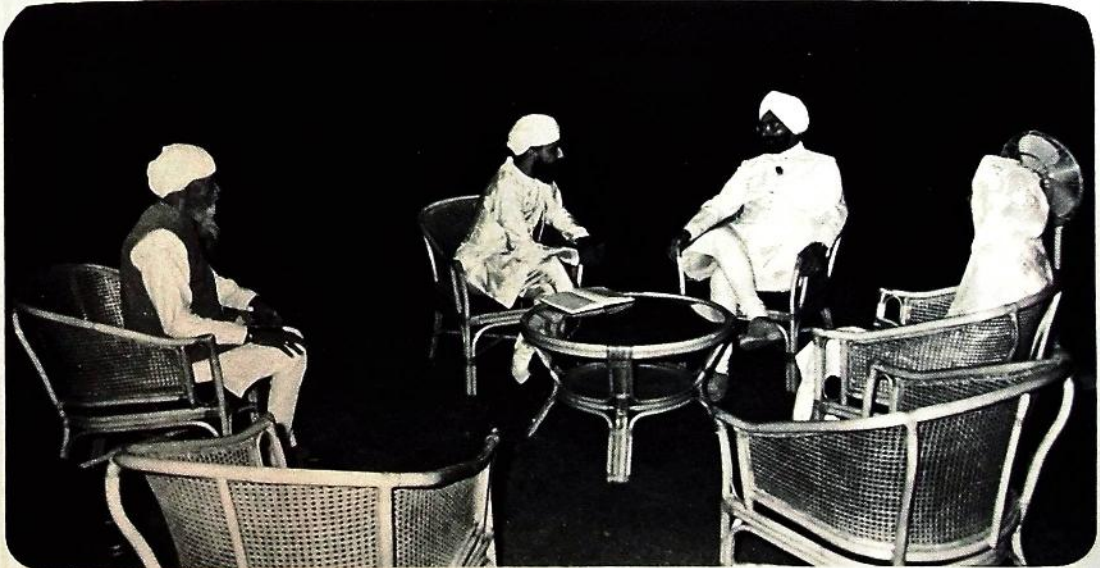
It became an instrument of peace, a sign of hope, a vision to a future and achieved independence from the foreign rule of the British in 1947.

It has ruled the world's largest democracy for four decades and it will endeavour to take India into the twenty first century as a major world political and an industrial power. It is a landmark in the history of modern civilization and it is our duty to cherish the achievements of our leaders who shaped the destiny of our motherland.

Let us all, Congressmen and women, make the next one hundred year even more dramatic in the chapter of the history of Congress and work for the unity and development of our Nation for which countless lives were sacrificed and remember whether we are Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims or whatever faith we subscribe to, we are INDIANS.

On the behalf of the Indian Youth Congress, U.K., I dedicate this Centenary Souvenir to the pioneers of and the freedom fighters of independent India.

Amarjeet Singh Bhamra
Chief Organizer
Indian Youth Congress U.K.



Congressmen, Shri Amar Singh "Nirman" (New Delhi), Amarjeet Singh Bhamra (Indian Youth Congress U.K.), Shri Giani Zail Singh - President of India and Mrs. Bhamra in dialogue at Presidential Palace in New Delhi - India.

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on its centenary.*



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THE PRIME MINISTER

We in Britain have a great admiration for India and a great love for its people. Our friendship is close because it was born of history and nurtured by shared ideas. Of all the values that Britain and India hold dear, none is greater than our common tradition of democracy.

I am proud that it was a Briton, Allan Octavian Home, who helped to found the Indian National Congress a century ago. All India may be proud that we are now celebrating its centenary. Let us also remember that it was our shared commitment to the democratic ideal that led to the uniting of our efforts in two world wars, and common sacrifices to the same cause.

I am grateful for this opportunity to be able to reaffirm the strength of the ties which bind us and the warmth of our friendship. It gives me great pleasure to convey my heartfelt congratulations and good wishes to the Indian National Congress on the historic occasion.



INDIAN YOUTH CONGRESS (I)

21, Janpath, New Delhi.

It is a matter of great pride for us the young generation born after our independence, to belong to a party which not only brought us freedom from foreign yoke but also built the nation into a modern democratic and secular state.

As the Indian National Congress completes one hundred glorious years in the service of the nation, every young congressman must draw inspiration from the selfless services and sacrifices of our great leaders like Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bhagat Singh, Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru, Netaji, Maulana Azad, and Indira Gandhi, who shaped the destiny of our great country.

We, the young congressmen have to devote all our energies in preserving the hard won freedom and achieving economic independence.

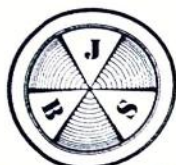
On this historic occasion, let us all take a pledge to serve selflessly the idea's of the Indian National Congress and help our beloved leader Sri Rajiv Gandhi in making India a strong self reliant and a prosperous nation.

Captain Praveen Davar

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The Office of the
Leader of The Opposition

Please accept my congratulations on the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Indian National Congress.

This souvenir brochure tells your history and with it much of the history of India over the last 100 years. It is a history of struggle: against colonial rule, to overcome poverty and suffering, to establish and sustain parliamentary institutions and to create a united, modern, prosperous and peaceful India.

It is also a history of achievement, a history which has inspired millions throughout the world and produced outstanding individuals whose example stands as an encouragement to all who strive for peace, equality, justice and social harmony.

Mighty challenges remain. As you set out to confront them and to create a new India I am delighted to have this opportunity to send my good wishes and greetings to you all.

Rt. Hon Neil Kinnock MP



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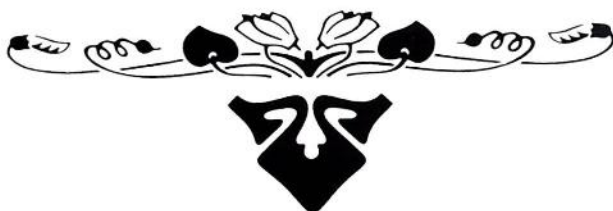
It gives me great pleasure to know that a Special Congress Centenary Souvenir is being published in the United Kingdom to celebrate the Centenary of the Indian National Congress.

The founding of the Indian National Congress was a historical event which shaped the destiny of India. Its impact on the Sub-Continent has been enormous in the struggle for independence for India.

On the occasion of the celebration of the Centenary of the formation of the Indian National Congress, I would like to wish the organizers full success in their endeavours.

Fakhruddin Ahmed

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THE link between the Indian National Congress and British Liberal Party go back beyond living memory, and have resulted in a relationship typified by mutual respect and affection.

So, it is with special pleasure that I congratulate Congress on reaching its centenary. This makes the Party the oldest democratic organisation in the world's largest democracy, a democracy which congress was instrumental in bringing about.

I am sure that Congress will not be content to rest on past achievements and will continue to fight for the rights of the Indian people and that its links with the Liberal Party in Britain will be maintained and strengthened.



NAMDHARI SANGAT U.K.

Satguru Ram Singh ji was exiled by the British in 1872 and the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, adopted His programme of Swadeshi, Non-cooperation and Boycott. There after, Namdhari Sikhs continued their struggle for the liberation of the country from the yoke of foreign rule alongside the Indian National Congress. The sacrifices of the Namdhari Sikhs shook the British rule of the time resulting in the position various restrictions and discriminations against them. In fact, Namdhari Headquarters Sri Bhani Sahib near Ludhiana became an active seat of carrying on the independence struggle in Northern India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru several times visited Sri Bhaini Sahib to seek the Blessings and Guidance of Satguru Pratap Singh Ji.

The traditional faith, friendship and cooperation continued between the present Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji and Smt. Indira Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi.

Namdhari Sikhs have all along been supporting the visionary politics of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and continue to support the good work initiated by Sri Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, which is a source of pride for all us Indians.

*Congratulations to the
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on its centenary.*



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The Indian National Congress can rightly claim to be one of the greatest democratic political movements of all time. As Britain's newest party - the SDP celebrates only its fifth birthday in March this year - we salute you on your centenary and look forward to close working relations with you in the future. I much look forward to my meeting with Rajiv Gandhi when I visit India myself in January.



AMBASSADOR OF PAKISTAN
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I am glad to know that your organization is publishing a Souvenir to mark the centenary of the Indian National Congress Party of India.

In the pre-Independence period, the Congress Party played an important role in the freedom struggle of the sub-continent. As is well-known, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah (who founded the State of Pakistan) was an illustrious leader of the Congress party during the first two decades of this century and his powerful voice rose from its platform in support of the right of the people of the sub-continent to be free and independent.

The young generation should know more about the sub-continent's freedom struggle and your Souvenir is, therefore, timely.

Ali Arshad

*Congratulations to the
Indian National Congress
on its centenary.*



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THE Congress Party of India has played the most important role in the history of India, especially in the struggle for Indian Independence and also in the construction of a new and modern India after independence. This has been of vital importance not only to India but to the whole world. The Congress Party has been foremost in the battle against imperialism and colonialism all over the world.

Julius Silverman.

I am glad to know that the Indian Youth Congress (U.K.) is publishing a special Congress Centenary Souvenir.

Indian National Congress was formed to bring together the patriotic forces, to pave way for independence and to safeguard the integrity and unity of Bharat. I hope that Indian National Congress continues promoting and propagating the ideals of one united India.

Surinder Gautama
Organising Secretary

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It is always a pleasure to send a message of good will between our two countries, and I think especially, of course, of my dear father who was so instrumental in helping India to achieve her independence in 1947 as the last Viceroy and first Governor-General.

As you will know my father worked very closely with the Indian National Congress at that time and made a great many friends amongst its members, including of course Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru who he felt very privileged to count amongst his friends. Both my parents had a deep love and understanding of India and her people and made many lifelong friendships. My sister, Pamela, and I have many happy memories of those far off days and of more recent visits, and of many friendships.

My husband, Lord Brabourne, also has very happy family associations with India as his father was Governor of Bombay, and later of Bengal, from 1933 to 1939, when he died in Calcutta. My parents-in-law also had a great love and understanding of India and her people and it is good to know the high esteem in which they too were held.

With best wishes

*Yours sincerely
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The Indian National Congress is the world's largest democratic party. It is not a political party as known to the western world.

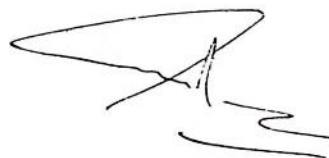
The party was founded by liberal thinking people who believed in India's freedom and in her dignity.

Those celebrating the Congress Centenary in Britain are grateful to Allan Octavian Hume, who founded this party, which marched India towards freedom.

Subsequently, the Party was led by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Indira Gandhi, who have all made their mark, not only on the country of India, but also on the history of the world.

The party has been fortunate in that it is now in the hands of a new and dynamic young leader, Mr Rajiv Gandhi.

I congratulate all those who are celebrating the Centenary and wish the Party every success during its next one hundred years.



Swraj Paul

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I salute to the people of India who fought for the independence of India under the honour of Indian National Congress.

India not only achieved independence but succeeded in establishing secular and democratic country. I am fully convinced that Congress Centenary celebrations will pledge to eradicate poverty and equal distribution of wealth to her people.

I congratulate Indian Youth Congress U.K. for its endeavour to publish this Souvenir on the Indian National Congress centenary.

H.R. Upad

INDIAN OVERSEAS CONGRESS U. K.

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Congress was a creation in India of an imperial power in 1885, to perpetuate its hold on the country for its continued economic and cultural exploitation. In due course the control of the organisation fell in the hands of those who were not ready to play the objective, for which the organisation was set up. Same organisation in the hands of Mahatma Gandhi was able to impart for the first time the confidence to the Indian masses that they can become FREE. Not only he gave them confidence he also gave the tool to achieve that aim. Over the years, Congress has gone back and now resembles more with the type of Congress which the imperialists had created. Unless there is realization that there is a need for working hard to maintain the security and integrity of the motherland, these celebrations after one hundred years will only remain a ritual and reminder that we have failed to build on the confidence which Mahatma Gandhi gave us.

S. S. S.

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A Brief History of Congress

THE Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 and in the same year, its first session was held in Bombay under the Presidentship of Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee. The illustrious sons of India like Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendra Nath Bannerjee and Madan Mohan Malaviya laid the foundation of this organisation. It can safely claim to be the oldest and the biggest democratic organisation in the world. The dedication and devotion, with which many great leaders served the Motherland under its patronage since its birth, inspired a large number of our countrymen and will continue to inspire further generations too. It was due to the great sacrifices and complete dedication of these leaders that this great organisation could play an influential role in freeing the Motherland from the foreign yoke. The history of the Congress is not only the history of or freedom struggle is but is also the chronicle of our socio-economic progress.

Role of the Minorities in the Evolution of the Congress

On of the many factors that have contributed to the rapid growth of Congress is that it has always consisted of representatives of all sections of the population. Its founders, presidents and leaders included a number of prominent leaders of the minorities. For example, its first President Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee was a Christian; its second President, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji was a Parsi; and its third President, Mr. Badruddin 'Tayabji', was a Muslim. The Congress from the very beginning has been a secular organisation and, in Independent India, the place of the secularism in the directive principles is primarily due to active role played by the minorities in building up this great organisation.

The Stewardship of Lokmanya Tilak

From the very beginning, the aim of the Congress was to establish parliamentary institution in the country. Renowned constitutional experts like Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendra Nath Bannerji and Gopal Krishan Gokhale, worked untiringly for setting up the parliamentary system of government and for the growth of secular, multilingual and multi-religious nationalism. The ever swelling ranks of Congressmen came to realise at the beginning of this century that the foreign rulers were not paying any heed to the demands of their countrymen. Agitated over this colonial posture, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Aurobindo Ghosh, Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Paul were the first to adopt the posture of radical nationalism and invoked their countrymen to adopt a more dynamic plan of action. The symbol of this spirit, Lokmanya Tilak, was the first to declare, "Swaraj is my birthright". but the Congress had many Moderates too. The two ideologies came to clash in the Surat session in 1907. The majority of the Congressmen vehemently supported the policy of Lokmanya Tilak and the moderates had to part company with the party. The

division in the party proved a blessing in disguise as the party emerged all the more stronger thereafter.

Later on the agitation for Home Rule during the first world war under the leadership of Mrs. Annie Beasant and other lent a new strength and vitality to the party.

Jalliwala Bagh Massacre:

Mahatma Gandhi's Stewardship

When Britain emerged victorious in the War, the Indians had great hopes that it would pay heed to their aspirations for independence. But the British rulers responded by killing hundreds of innocent people in Jalliwala Bagh at Amritsar.

Popular leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and Saifuddin Kitchlu were thrown in jail. Hundreds of other were arrested. At this critical juncture, Mahatma Gandhi took over as the leader of the Indian National Congress. Prior to this, he had earned fame by spearheading the just struggle against the white colonial rule in South Africa. Under his leadership, the Congress declared removal of poverty and sufferings of people is its cherished goal.

Congress, the Symbol of Popular Aspiration: Ahimsa (Non-Violence) Its Basic Principle.

The role of the Congress Party as a movement for the cause of millions of countrymen suffering from hunger and deprivation was not properly realised until Mahatma Gandhi appeared on the scene. He gave a clear and definite lead to the party. It became clear to all the foreign domination was the basic cause of the dire poverty and immense sufferings of our countrymen and to root out foreign domination was not the ultimate goal but the means for achieving the real goal. The ultimate, real objective was to build a prosperous India in which all would have an equal opportunity for progress and growth. In order to achieve this goal, it was essential to create political awakening among the masses and train them for a struggle through non-violence against the foreign domination. Thus, non-violence became the basic creed of Congress.

Nehru's Leadership

In 1929, Jawaharlal Nehru presided over the Lahore session of the Congress. In this session, the Congress declared complete freedom as its ultimate goal and thus a new chapter was added in the history of reawakening in India. In his Presidential address, Nehru said: "I very frankly admit that I am a socialist and a democrat."

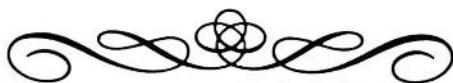
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During the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930-31 and 1931-32, Indians undertook agitations on the appeal from the Congress and these movements shook the foundations of the foreign rule in India. Thousands of Indians agitating peacefully received bullets from the British soldiers and courted arrests.

In 1933-34, Nehru wrote a book "Whither India?" and his book proved historical as it greatly influenced the national thinking. A large number of people participating in the national movement were influenced by it and they seriously started pondering about socialism.

Writing about Rajas, Nawabas, Zamindars, big and small farmers, capitalists, industrialists agricultural labourers and other such groups, he said: "It is clear that all these groups have their own vested interests which are at variance with one another. A law or a policy that may be good for one group may be harmful for the other ... But nothing would be more absurd than to think that everyone's interest can be assured without affecting anyone. At every step, someone will have to sacrifice in the interest of others."

Mahatma Gandhi's Declaration at RTC.

The Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi could feel the pulse of the nation. At the Second Round Table Conference held in London in 1931, he said, "In fact, the Congress represents millions of those unfortunate people in land of India who are unable to make both ends meet The Congress will safeguard the interest of only those groups in whose interest lie the interests of millions of these people. Many a time one sees clash among various interests. If a clash really takes place, then I would not hesitate to declare on behalf of the Congress that it would sacrifice all other interests to safeguard the interests of millions of these people."

Karachi Congress: Resolution on Fundamental Rights

The historic Karachi session of Congress in 1931 was held under the Chairmanship of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel in which the famous resolution on fundamental rights was adopted. The resolution was moved by Mahatma Gandhi himself and was a very significant step taken by the Congress. The resolution demanded that after independence, the constitution of India must incorporate some of the fundamental rights recommended in this resolution.

The resolution said, "In order to save the masses from exploitation it is imperative that along with the political freedom, the millions of our masses should also get economic dependence in its true sense."

Lucknow Congress 1936: Foreign Policy Formulation Under the Leadership of Nehru

In the Lucknow session, Jawaharlal Nehru attempted to give a new direction to the policies of the Congress. His most important role was to formulate foreign policy for the country. It was based on working for peace and freedom, support for freedom struggle



W.C. BONNERJEE



DADABHAI NAOROJI

elsewhere in the world and raising our voice against colonialism. Our foreign policy in the years thereafter and even after independence has in fact been based on these very principles.

Faizpur Congress: Agricultural programme

The Faizpur session in 1937 was also presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru. In this session, reports by the provincial Congress committees on agriculture were discussed in detail and a comprehensive resolution detailing the agricultural problems in the country was also adopted.

Like the fundamental rights resolution of the Karachi Congress, the Faizpur agricultural programme proved to be a significant step in determining the agricultural land policies of the Congress.

Constructive Programme

Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the Congress paid special attention to the constructive activities so as to prepare the countrymen for the days to come and create national awakening not only for the rights but for the duties also. Congressmen through the Khadi Sangh, All India Gramudhyog Association and other constructive bodies and under the direct supervision of Mahatma Gandhi, reached the far flung villages and areas all over the country. This step proved of great significance in preparing the nation for the final struggle for freedom and in the reconstruction of new India.

In this regard, the Hindustani Talimi Sangh deserves a special mention as it played a very significant role. The originator of this scheme was Dr. Zakir Hussain and a staunch nationalist. He later became the third President of the Republic of India. The basic of the new scheme was promoting of handicrafts so that person trained in them could lead a self-sufficient life.

Congress Roots Among the Masses

Mahatma Gandhi founded the All India Harijan Sevak Sangh. After his release from jail in 1934, Mahatma Gandhi toured throughout the country for the upliftment of Harijans. The Harijan Sevak Sangh thus became a medium and through this sangh, the nationalist movement came in direct contact with the depressed and oppressed masses of the country.

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In this way, the Congressmen mingled with the masses of India through constructive activities under the inspiring leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

Attainment of Freedom

In 1929, the Lahore session under the Chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru took the pledge to attain complete independence for the country. In the historic meeting of All India Congress Committee held in Bombay in August, 1942, which was presided over by Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Mahatma Gandhi gave the slogan Do or Die and the people of India stood up as one force to snatch the freedom from the foreign rulers. Though unarmed the people of India valiantly challenged the cruel might of the British rulers. Their struggle bore fruit in 1947 and India attained the long cherished independence.

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose raised the Indian National Army from among the Indian soldiers of the British Army who had been captured by Japan in South Asia. The activities of the INA comprise a golden chapter in the national struggle for freedom. It created a deep impression on the Indian police and the British to Indian Navy and contribute a great deal to the decision of the British to quit India. Netaji unfortunately lost his life in a plane crash but he became an immortal soldier in the freedom struggle of India.

The freedom struggle brought forth a number of illustrious men and the fore runners of modern parliamentary system like Desh Bandhu C.R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru to the forefront of national life. It produced undaunted freedom fighters and top-ranking leaders like Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad and Dr. Rajendra Prasad. It brought forth great patriots and Martyrs like Khudiram, Chandrasekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh and Ashfaqullah. Besides them, many leaders of the All India State Peoples Conference encouraged freedom struggle in the Indian states and the people there played their due role in the freedom struggle of India through their sacrifices and thus contributed in the achievement of independence for the country.

National Planning Committee

The Haripura session of Congress in 1938 was chaired by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. In this session a national committee for drafting a development plan was set up under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru. It can be safely said that this committee was the precursor of the national Planning Commission set up after independence.

Establishment of Socialist Society

Independence does not only mean the end of foreign domination from the country. It assumes real meaning and becomes beneficial only when exploitation ends, poverty is eradicated and unfettered socialism is established in the country. Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose had time and again emphasised the real significance of the freedom movement and this fundamental meaning of independence.

Historical Avadi Session:

Acceptance of Socialist Principles:



JAWAHARLAL NEHRU



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The 1955 Avadi session was a significant step towards the achievement of socialist goals which have been the main objective of the Congress. In the famous Avadi resolution the Congress officially declared that its goal is to achieve the socialistic pattern of society in which the ownership or control over the principal means of production would rest with the society, the production would be stepped up and there should be a just distribution of the national wealth. Expressing his view on this resolution, Jawaharlal Nehru said that India would have to evolve its own socialism and this would have to be brought about through hard labour and not by the official machinery alone.

Nagpur Session 1959

The resolution adopted in the Nagpur Session in 1959 says It should be made clear to all that the aim of Planning is to establish democratic socialism in the country.

It was also made clear in this session that the Congress is in favour of cooperative farming. The resolution said that the land in excess of the ceiling with a family should be declared Panchayat land and it should be handed over to the cooperative societies of the landless agricultural labourers.

Bhubaneswar Resolution 1964:

On democracy and socialism

In January 1964, Congress in its Bhubaneswar session passed a resolution on democracy and socialism. In this resolution the Congress declared the establishment of a socialist state as its goal. But the resolution cautioned that economic development should not be done in such a way that wealth and production get concentrated in a few hands.

Defeat of Reactionary elements in Congress

Pandit Nehru died on May 27, 1964. Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri became the Prime Minister after the then Congress president, Shri Kamaraj secured consensus for him. Pakistan attacked India in 1965. People of different faiths surpassed each other in making sacrifices for the Motherland. This established the relevance and importance of the secular policy pursued by the Congress.

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the Lok Sabha. Thus the hurdles in enacting progress socio-economic measures were removed. After elections immediate steps were taken to abolish privileges and privy purses of the former rulers.

Bangladesh War: Smt. Indira Gandhi's Inspiring Leadership

Pakistan attacked India in December 1971 but the Indian forces dealt a crushing blow to its nefarious designs. The establishment of Bangladesh was a symbol of success of India's policies of peace, democracy, secularism and socialism. During the period, Smt. Indira Gandhi's sagacious leadership, her humility in the hour of victory and steadfast devotion to principles, raised the prestige of India in the world.

Reactionary Elements Use Extra Constitutional Means to Destroy Democracy

After continuously facing defeat in the Lok Sabha results of 1971, the State Assembly results of 1971 and later in the Assembly elections of U.P. and Orissa the feudal elements and vested interests lost all hopes of gaining power and setting the clock back through the ballot and democratic methods.

The year 1974 started with the Gujarat Movement, Nav Nirman Sangarsha Samities were formed to create tension and put hurdles in the way of democratic functioning through non-violent methods. Elected legislators were gheraoed and were threatened and humiliated in order to force them to resign. And then Shri Morarji Desai undertook a fast unto death. Many people in Gujarat lost their lives and Government and private properties worth millions of rupees was destroyed. The process of violent agitation also started in Bihar. The Opposition parties chalked out a systematic programme to bandh, gherao, subversive activities and inciting industrial labour, police and members of the defence forces to subvert the Government. The programme was commenced on June 29, 1975. Thus democracy was given a go by and extra constitutional methods were adopted to remove lawfully elected governments.

Declaration of Emergency

Thus in these circumstances, the President of India had to declare a State of Emergency, the Prime Minister said, "Efforts have been made in the name of democracy to stop democratic functioning. Lawfully elected governments have not been allowed to function and in some cases forces have been used to compel elected members to resign."

With the declaration of Emergency, the Government also took action against those people who wanted to create anarchy in the country. The Congress organisation started a massive campaign to educate people on political issues. Discipline and devotion to duties became a part of the national ethos. Strikes, layoffs, bandh and gheraos were totally stopped; the law and order situation improved considerably; crimes figures went down and production in the factories went up. Things improved so much so that Acharya Vinobha

Bhave termed this period as **Anushashan Parva**, an era of discipline.

The Prime Minister, Smt. Gandhi lifted the Emergency and ordered fresh elections after establishing peace, law and order and strengthening economy.

Congress Defeat in 1977

Before 1977 Lok Sabha elections, many reactionary parties formed an alliance in the form of the Janata Party. Reactionary and communal elements were the main force in that organisation. The Janata Party secured the majority in the Lok Sabha and it formed the Government. Congress assumed the role of an opposition party as envisaged in the democratic framework.

The Congress Party underwent tremendous tension after its defeat in 1977. When it seemed that the Congress would lose its identity and effective leadership, the majority of the members of AICC assembled at New Delhi on 1st and 2nd January 1978 and elected Shrimati Indira Gandhi as the Congress President unanimously. The people also supported this step in the elections to the Legislative Assemblies of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in February 1978 and in some bye-elections. The people gave their clear verdict that only the Congress (I) can take the country in the direction of secularism, socialism and a just social order.

Some leaders continued to function under the name of Indian National Congress though they had to face defeat a number of times. This party is now known as Congress (S). Attainment of power was the only motivating force for these people and they were rewarded with offices in the Charan Singh Cabinet. Their party has become totally irrelevant in the eyes of the people and is fast disappearing from the political arena.

The Indian National Congress (I) had been recognised as such by the Election Commission. It has been functioning as an effective democratic party since March 1977. It has spearheaded many popular historical struggles.

Mid-Term Poll of 1980 Congress (I) Victory and its Achievements

In the mid-term poll to Lok Sabha in 1980, the people returned Congress (I) to power with a thumping majority and thus expressed their full faith in the leadership of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, her younger son Sanjay Gandhi and Congress (I) policies and programmes. The Janata Party government had played havoc with the national economy during its regime and it was totally put out of gear. As soon as Prime Minister Indira Gandhi assumed the reins of administration in 1980, she countered this hopeless situation and restored the economic infrastructure to good health through the effective policies of the Congress (I). The new 20-Point Programme, which is a charter of the aspirations of the people, has made tremendous progress. India's voice was again heard with respect throughout the world and the nation once more started moving toward a better and purposeful future.

The Opposition parties and factions did not take their defeat sportingly. They continued with their disruptive activities which endanger the functioning of democracy. The search of the so-called alternative to the Congress is nothing but to bring together old conspirators. The country has already suffered because of this between 1977 and 1979. AICC in its Bombay meeting in October 1983, asked the people to be aware of these unprincipled and harmful activities.

"The AICC (I) cautions the country that the forces of destabilisation are working actively to weaken and if possible, disrupt national unity. In a developing society, the expectations of the masses are constantly rising. The task of political parties should be to see that complex problems of nation-building are resolved on the basis of policies and approached that strengthen the unity and the integrity of the nations."

The meeting voicing its concern over the deteriorating international situation said that tension was increasing everywhere. This crisis is a threat to human civilisation. The Committee appealed to all peace-loving people whether they belonged to those countries which had atomic weapons or they belonged to others that they should work for complete disarmament and the welfare of everyone. The committee reiterated its commitment to the principles of non-alignment and expressed its faith that the movement would grow stronger and the combined strength of all the nations would be able to remove the gathering darkness and create an atmosphere of hope and security in the world.

New Party President: 1984

Mrs. Indira Gandhi was assassinated at her residence on the 31st October 1984 at subsequently the nation elected Shri Rajiv Gandhi, their new Prime Minister at the General Elections held in December 1984.

In his presidential address to the Congress Centenary session, the youngest India Prime Minister did not spare even his own party and the opposition for falling a prey to the degeneration that had set-in in the public life.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi launched a blistering attack on the administrative and technical services, the legal system, electoral process and pledges to bring about structural changes in their functioning and make them vehicles of service to the people.

The Prime Minister's attack on the erring tax collectors and industrialists was equally sharp. He said there were reputed business and industrial establishments "which shelter battalions of law-breakers and tax-evaders."

Referring to the role of the press, Mr. Gandhi said he only wanted the media to put a question to themselves - "does the media's contribution to nation building measure up to their role in the freedom struggle."

Talking about the administrative and technical services, the police and the myriad functionaries of the state, Mr. Gandhi said "they have done so much and can do so much, but as the proverb says there can be no protection if the fence starts eating the crop. This is

what has happened. The fence has started eating the crop.

"We have government servants, who do not serve but oppress the poor and the helpless, police who do not uphold the law but shield the guilty, tax-collectors who do not collect taxes but connive with those who cheat the state, and whole legions whose concern is there private welfare at the cost of the society. They have no work ethic, no feeling for the public cause, no involvement in the future of the nation, no comprehension of national goal, no commitment to the value of modern India"

They have only "grasping, mercenary" outlook, devoid of competence, integrity and commitment, he said.

Mr. Gandhi said any denial of justice to the poor and the weak was in itself a crime. He promised to streamline and strengthen with judicial institutions and the legal system.

Mr. Gandhi said India was among few countries to have the rule of law and independent judiciary but thousands wait for decades while and "elaborate and arcane machinery grinds ever so slowly". He promised the people to change the electoral laws to ensure cleaner election making political parties accountable for the funds they received. The Prime Minister said that trade unions showed little concern for the creation of national wealth.

Power without responsibility, and rights without duties have come to be their prerogative.

Calling for a mass movement based on the Congress ideology, which only could cleanse the party and the nation of the rot that has set-in, Gandhi said millions of ordinary Congress workers through out the country were full of enthusiasm for the Congress programmes. Asking his party men to awake and arise, Gandhi said "Congress workers, who faced the bullets of British imperialism run for shelter at the slightest manifestation of caste and communal tension. Is this the party that Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi showed to a secular democratic India?" he asked. Stating the revitalisation of the Congress was a historical necessity as no other political party is capable of defending the unity and integrity of the country existed, the Prime Minister, spoke of the bankruptcy of the opposition.

All other parties were shot through and through with internal contradiction. "The sorry, unedifying spectacle of there total incapacity, corruption, nepotism, hypocrisy had disfigured our political landscape." Gandhi said "those who campaign for a weak centre campaign against the unity of India."

Courtesy: Articles and Publications Sub-Committee, Congress Centenary (1985) Celebrations Committee - India and India Weeks - U.K.



Tryst with Destiny

Sixty-two years after the Indian National Congress was founded, India was formally declared Independent as from midnight of the 14th August 1947. On this historic occasion, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who was at the time Vice-President (and effectively the Prime Minister) of the Interim Government with special responsibilities as Minister of External Affairs & Commonwealth Relations, made the following declaration in the Constituent Assembly, New Delhi, on the eve of the attainment of Independence:

“LONG YEARS AGO we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the still larger cause of humanity.


At the dawn of history India started on her unending quest, and trackless centuries are filled with her striving and the grandeur of her success and failures. Through good and ill fortune alike she has never lost sight of that quest or forgotten the ideals which gave her strength. We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again. The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs and achievements that await us. Are we brave enough and wise enough to grasp this opportunity and accept the challenge of the future?

Freedom and power bring responsibility. The responsibility rests upon this Assembly, a sovereign body representing the sovereign people of India. Before the birth of freedom we have endured all the pains of labour and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue even now. Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons to us now.

That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we may fulfil the pledges we have so often taken and the one we shall take today. The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity. The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but as long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over.

And so we have to labour and to work, and work hard, to give reality to our dreams. Those dreams are for India, but they are also for the world, for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for any one of them to imagine that it can live apart. Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is freedom, so is prosperity now, and so also is disaster in this One World that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.

To the people of India, whose representatives we are, we make an appeal to join us with faith and confidence in this great adventure. This is no time for petty and destructive criticism, no time for ill will or blaming others. We have to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell.”...



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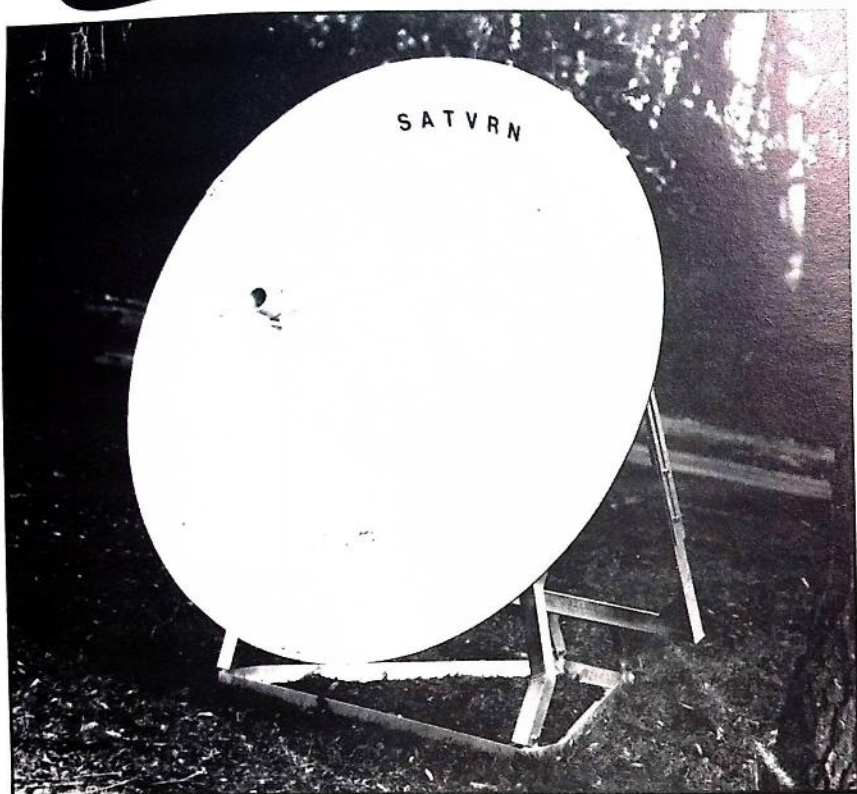
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SATGURU RAM SINGH'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

- AZAL M.A. -

NEVER in history has the inception of a nationality been so dramatic, so sudden, as the birth of the Khalsa around the Baisakhi day of 1699 which fell in March, then. The drama was enacted by Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Guru of the Sikhs. At a congregation, He announced that only those who could literally sacrifice their lives over Him and His mission would hence forward be treated as His true followers. He enjoyed upon all the newly created disciplines to wear the same type of dress, to eat the same kind of food (vegetarian), to follow the teachings of the Guru alike, and to fight the tyrants unitedly. Thus, He bestowed on them, sans independence, all the other ingredients of a nation - one religion, one culture, one political aspiration, one language and one history and even the same oneness in their outward appearance with their beards flowing and the hair of the head allowed to remain uncut.

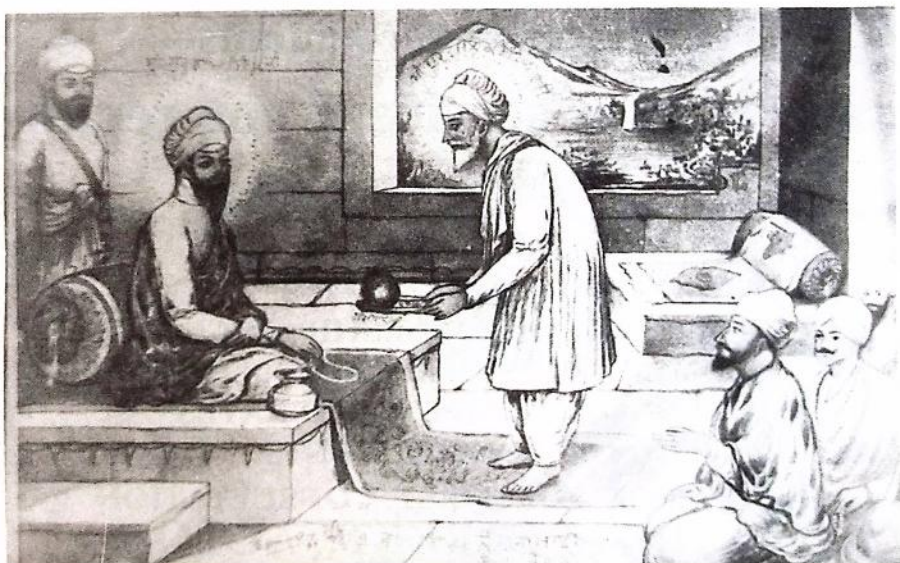
This militant nation struggled for the creation of a separate state and achieved its aim at last. The Misls (district states) were formed by the Sikhs over most of the area, now called Punjab, Haryana, Afghanistan, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh. On the ruins of some of these Misls was founded, by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, an empire which created in the Sikhs a kind of pride, for they had now a homeland, a powerful, completely independent and rich State. The political aspirations of the Sikhs are similar to those of the Jews. This later have an Israel which they own today with pride.

The Punjabis too once had such a State, but were deprived of it in 1849 after the death of Maharaja and, subsequently, as a result of the annexation of Punjab by the British. Hence the Sikhs have been pursuing a struggle for a sovereign Punjab or later, for an independent or autonomous state. To resurrect the Khalsa and to regain the lost independence had thus risen in the post-Ranjit Singh period, a socio-political organization which crusaded against the Muslim and English tyranny. These Sikhs were called Namdharis and their campaign "Kooka Movement."

Originality of Thought

Satguru Ram Singh of Bhaini, the founder of the movement, was endowed with originality in political thinking. He devised novel ways to fight against the Government. His boycott of a government's goods and services never been tried in history earlier except in the USA by Henry David Thoreau, Satguru Ram Singh's contemporary, who fought as an individual a war against his government, but in a little different manner and in a different context altogether.

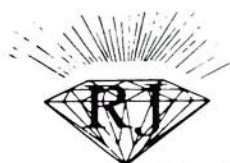
Thoreau and Satguru Ram Singh never met. The possibility of their having exchanged ideas could, therefore, never arise. The Guru's was a formidable organisation to back Him, while Thoreau's was a lonely voice in the wilderness.



The successor of Guru Gobind Singh, Guru Balak Singh (standing) performing the appointment of Guruship to His successor the twelfth Guru of the Sikhs, Satguru Ram Singh.



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Another boycott movement of this nature was later launched by Mahatma Gandhi who must have taken a cue from the Kookas. He emulated Satguru Ram Singh and asked His followers to non-cooperate with the authority. But while with the Kookas it was a religion to obey their Guru in the same fashion as their grandfathers had obeyed Guru Gobind Singh, with the followers of Mahatma Gandhi it was a mere political expediency and not a matter of religious faith. So, to draw a comparison between the two would be unnecessary. Gandhi was indeed a follower of Guru Ram Singh, in a way.

However, the late President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, compared the two movements in an article in March 1935, published in Satyug, and said, "Guru Ram Singh believed in political freedom as a part of religion. The organisation of the Namdharis became considerably strong. The boycott and non-cooperation, which Mahatma Gandhi started so vigorously in our own times, was preached fifty years ago by Guru Ram Singh for the Namdharis."

The united resistance put up by Guru Ram Singh's followers created once again a sense of nationalism among them which was, however, limited only to Punjab then. But after Him, in a wake of the Congress movement the scope covered the independence not only of their "country", which during Ranjit Singh's times Punjab was known to be, but the whole of India.

Seditious Guru and His Mantar

It is interesting to note that during Guru Ram Singh's times there was no distinction between the ordinary Sikhs and the Namdharis, though, a Sikh or a Non-Sikh had to appear before the Guru to become a Namdhari, to renew his faith in Him and His campaign and get "rejuvenated" after taking from Him Gurmantar at a ceremony. The Gurmantar was a packed militancy "First consent to death, give up the desire to live, become the dust of the earth; then come to me."

The belief was that Guru Ram Singh was the

reincarnation of Guru Gobind Singh. And only those among the Sikhs who after having been torn apart from Guru Gobind Singh during hundred and fifty years of the Guru's absence, had fallen a prey to complacency, did not participate in this movement. Some of such callous Sikhs acted even as British spies against the Kookas.

Dr. Fauja Singh Bajwa, refers in his "Kooka Movement" to Attar Singh's "Sau Sakhis" and says that, "there were letters in circulation based on the Sau Sakhis which referred to prophecy of Guru Gobind Singh, saying that He would be reborn as Ram Singh." Dr. Bajwa quotes Government records and says that "Guru Ram Singh's disciples actually believed him to be Guru Gobind Singh, risen from the dead again.

A report compiled by Mr. J.W. MacNabb, (Commissioner of Ambala - 1871) reported the following to the Government :-

"I see in earlier papers that Guru Ram Singh was looked upon as a successor or actual imbodiment of Guru Nanak, the saint. He is now the representative of Gobind, the warrior."

Seen in this context, it is imaginable how powerful had been the organisation of Guru Ram Singh.

The Guru was a former soldier in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army but had left the service in 1845, six years after the Maharaja's death, and had settled in Bhaini, a village near Ludhiana (Punjab) which was His birth place. He was saintly, popular and an extremely good organiser and a trained soldier. Disgusted with the affairs, firstly under the successors of Ranjit Singh and, then, under the British rule in particular, He decided to overthrow the British regime.

Political Resurrection of a Nation

With this background and this end in view, at the age of 41 Satguru Ram Singh started the movement. The Namdharis carried with them Lathis. Probably expediency had demanded the kirpan's abandonment.

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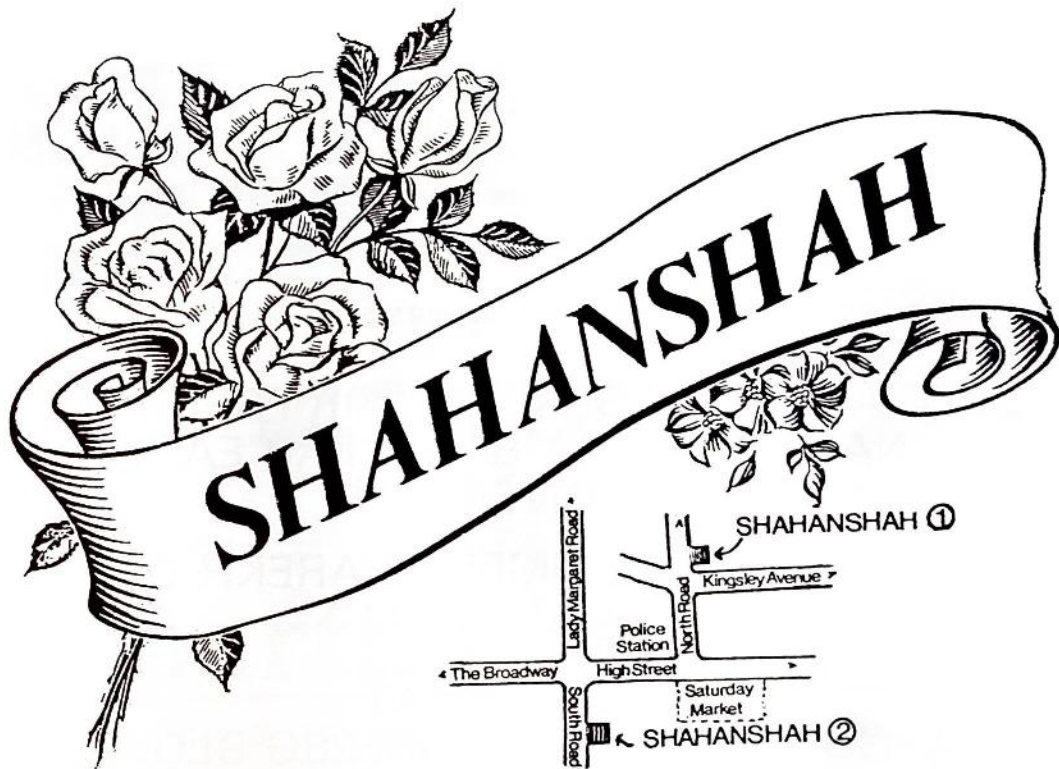
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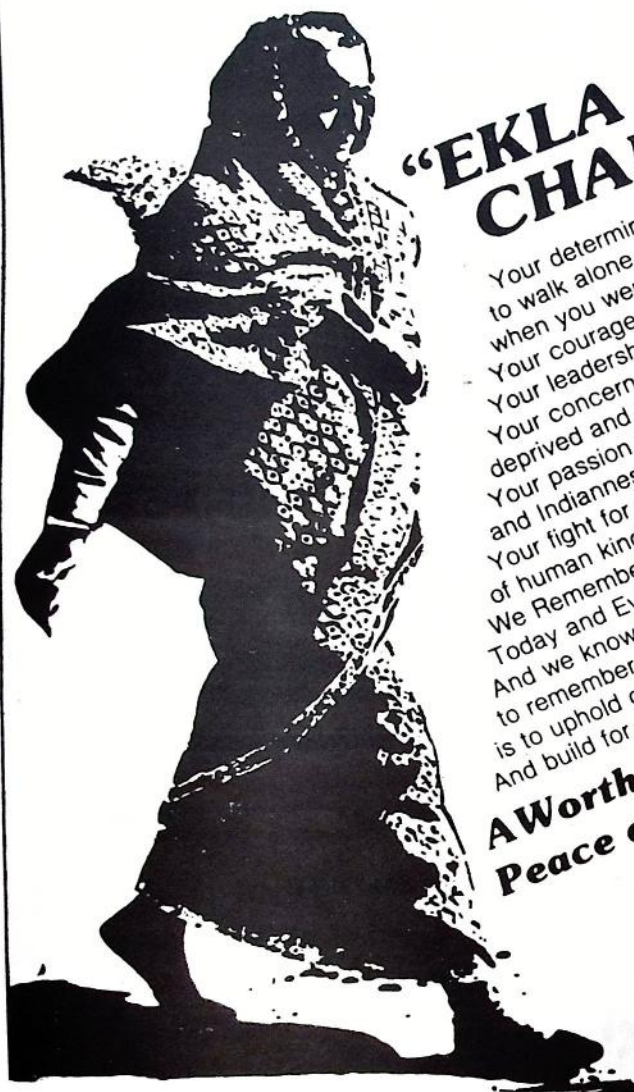
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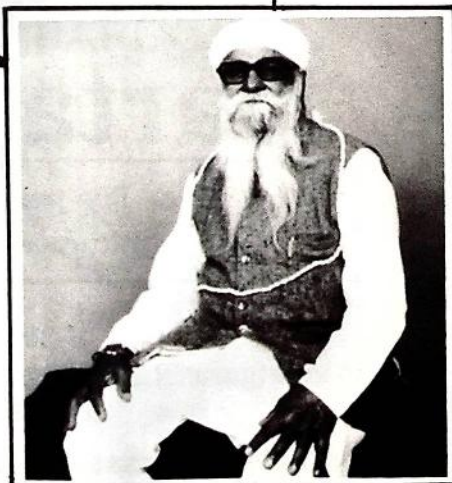
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Following the footsteps of Gandhi

DURING the present centenary celebrations of the Indian National Congress it becomes all the more important for us to remember the father of the nation and reflect on the ideals that he cherished. The cornerstone of Gandhiji's philosophy was the concept of "Ahimsa" or non-violence, towards all living beings - human and animal. Gandhiji's chosen method of struggle against injustice and oppression both in South Africa and India was that of 'Satya-graha' - Satyagraha, Gandhiji said was a method by which "The opponent must be weaned from error by sympathy and patience, not crushed."

Gandhiji set an example not only to India but to the rest of the World, by adhering to the concept of Ahimsa. On his tragic death, Philip Noel Baker, the British delegate to the Security Council of the United Nations said, "Gandhi's greatest achievements are still to come." In the age of 'Nuclear and Star Wars' this is certainly true. The burden propogating Gandhiji's ideal of Ahimsa falls heavily on the shoulders of India - It remains the only hope for mankind.

Gandhiji's non-violence however extended towards all living beings - even animals. Hence he

remained a strict vegetarian all his life. He said the following about cow protection, "Cow protection to me is infinitely more than mere protection of the cow. The cow is merely a type of all that lives. Cow protection means protection of the weak, the helpless, the dumb and the deaf. Man becomes then not the Lord and master of all creation but he is its servant". He further said, "Vivisection (experiments on live animals) is the blackest of all the black crimes that man is at present committing against God and his fair creation."

On yet another occasion he said, "I do feel that spiritual progress does demand at some stage that we should cease to kill our fellow creatures for the satisfaction of our bodily wants."

Thus while Gandhiji was instrumental in dismantling colonialism, he also initiated the movement for a compassionate treatment of the animal world.

He even left us a yardstick - "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way it treats its animals."

Nitin Mehta

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*"We would have been nowhere,
if there had been no Congress."*

— Mahatma Gandhi

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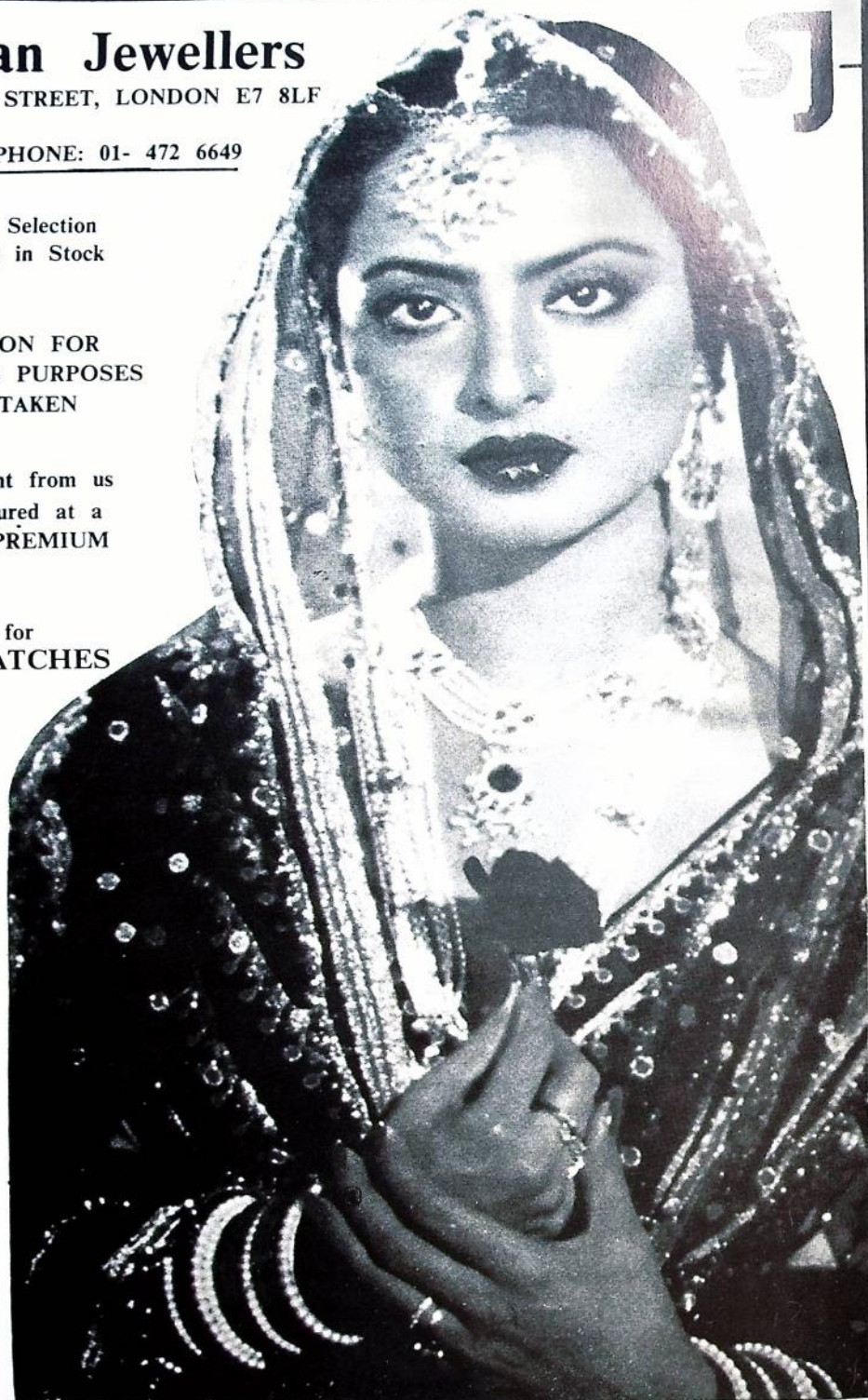
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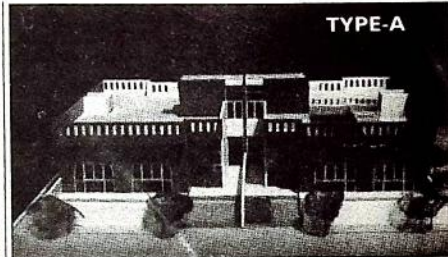
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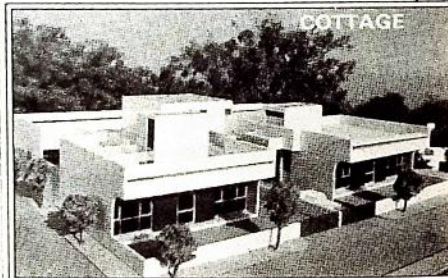
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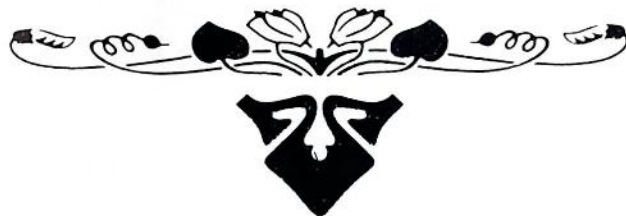
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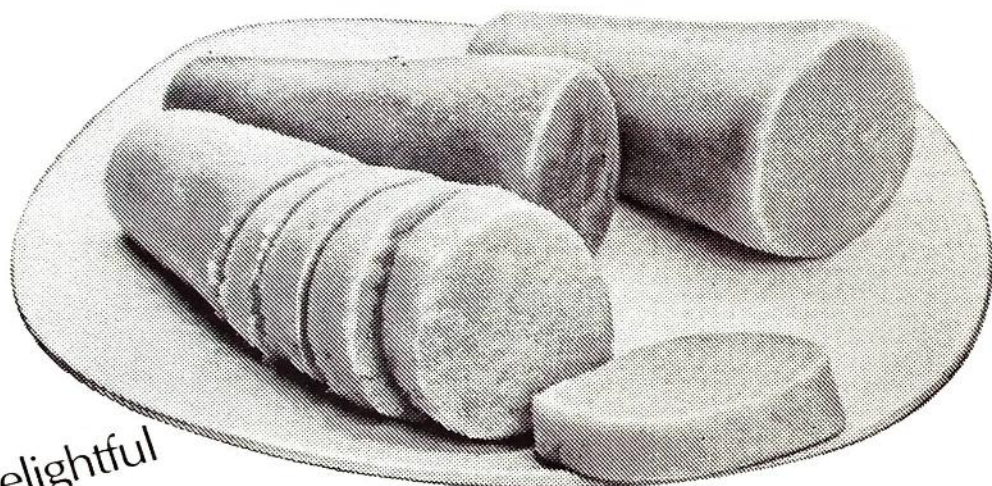
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The First Indian National Congress held in Bombay on 28, 29 and 30 December 1885. Seated at the centre of the middle row is Allan Octavian Hume with Dadabhai Naoroji on his right, and the first President, W. C. Bonnerjee on his left.

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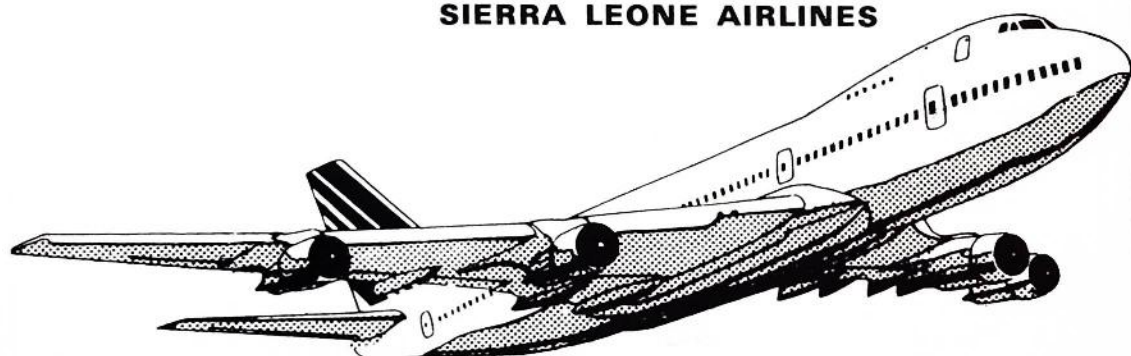
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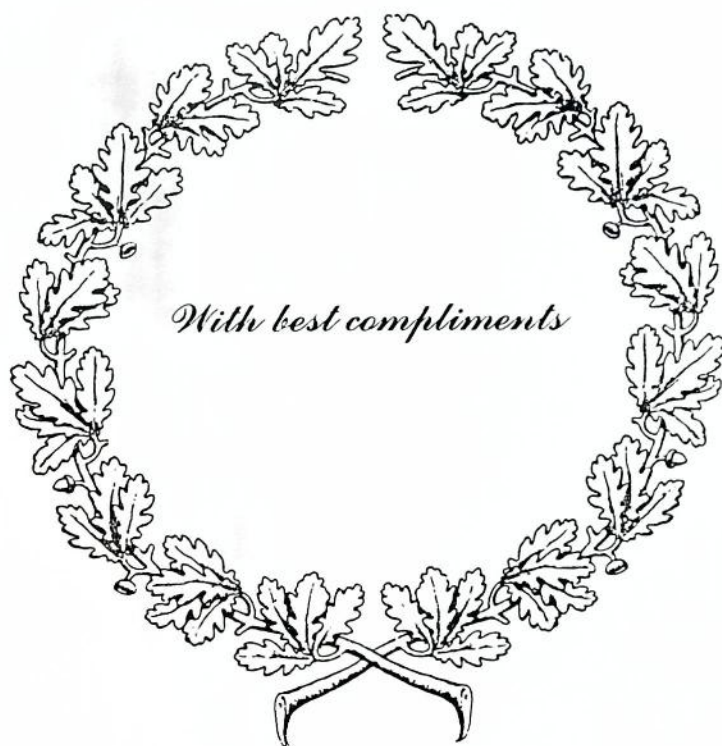
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